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"That we may have peace—you teach war."

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# AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

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## NAVAL WAR COLLEGE

NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND,

AT THE ANNUAL OPENING, JUNE SECOND, NINETEEN HUNDRED,

BY

THE HONORABLE FRANK W. HACKETT,  
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE NAVY.

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525.8

WASHINGTON:

GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE.

1900.

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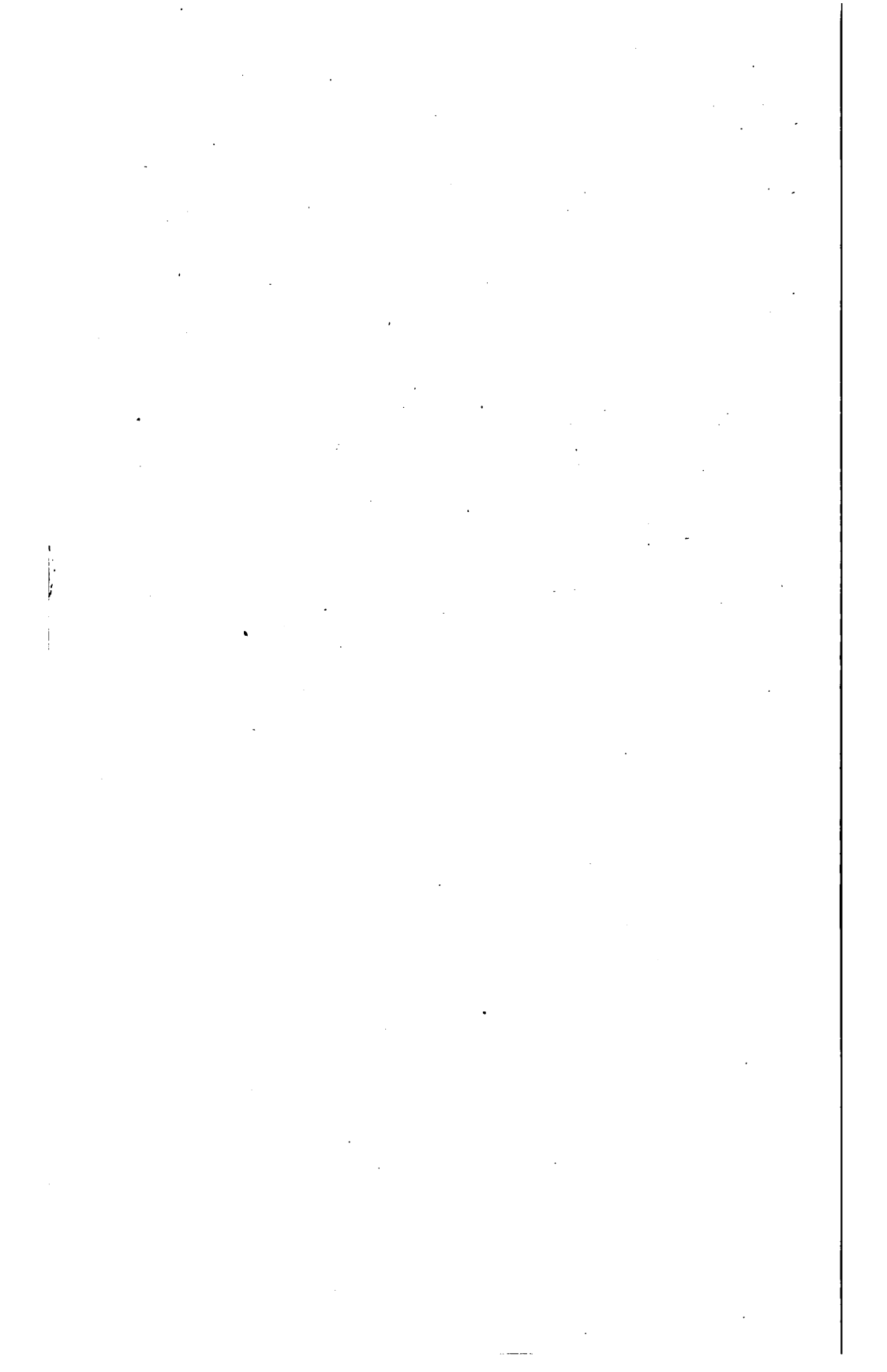
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## ADDRESS.

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*Mr. President, and Gentlemen of the War College:*

The twelvemonth just past has proved a busy year in national affairs. For the first time since the formation of the Government has it fallen to the President to send from our shores to an island of the sea a civil governor, who should in his person represent the dignity and power of the United States. Fortunately for us, and fortunately for Porto Rico, the Chief Executive was at no loss whither to turn.

A judgment so sound, and an address so pleasing, had characterized the administration of Assistant Secretary ALLEN that the President bade him lay aside his work for the Navy, and hasten to San Juan with a message of good will.

You who have witnessed the success attendant upon his efforts for the welfare of the service need not be reminded how completely to Mr. ALLEN's taste was the work in which he had become engrossed. You may well understand with what reluctance he has abandoned these congenial duties in order to take up larger responsibilities in an unfamiliar field. The new Governor yielded to the choice of the President from a dictate of duty. He was sorry to leave the Department, and everybody there was sorry to part from him.

Let us rejoice, however, that the people of Porto Rico are setting out upon their new political life under the guidance of so gallant a leader.

Standing here as the successor of Assistant Secretary ALLEN, I share your regret that to-day does not find him here speaking to you words of counsel and encouragement. It is a pleasing office assigned to the Assistant Secretary, that he shall come to Newport, and by his presence at the opening exercises

testify to the unabated interest felt by the Department in the growth in usefulness of the Naval War College. So far as good wishes avail, permit me to assure you that I bring them in fullest measure.

This institution, young as it is, has amply justified its existence. No thoughtful observer, I feel sure, whether in or out of the service, can fail to perceive that as graver problems of naval administration from time to time present themselves, under conditions ever varying, they demand for solution influences that can be fostered and perfected only through means to be supplied by a college such as this.

For the privilege of responding to your invitation, I am duly grateful. The occasion demands the best that one has to give. I am not a little concerned, however, as to the line of thought adapted to my capacities, and therefore most appropriate to pursue. It is usually expected of an opening address that it shall strike a keynote. This, I confess, I can not do. Surely it is not for a worker taken up on the rolls at the eleventh hour to harbor any such ambitious purpose.

It was of Lord John Russell, you remember, that Sydney Smith rather teasingly said:

There is not a better man in England, but his worst failure is that he is utterly ignorant of all moral fear; there is nothing that he would not undertake. I believe he would perform the operation for the stone, build St. Peter's, or assume (with or without ten minutes' notice) the command of the Channel Fleet; and no one would discover by his manner that the patient had died, the church tumbled down, and the Channel Fleet been knocked to atoms.

There may be Lord Johns in the country at large, but we have not been making assistant secretaries of them—at least, not lately. With your permission, then, I shall speak from the standpoint of the average American citizen.

Our Navy has never been intrenched more firmly in the popular heart than at this very hour. Time was when admiration for our sailors found a home chiefly along the seaboard, but to-day it knows no bounds of locality. Coast and interior alike pulsate with a thrill of patriotic fervor for glorious achievement. The peaks of the Rockies, as it were, catch

the spray of inspiration. No village in the land is so remote that the guns of DEWEY and of SAMPSON have not awakened gladdening echoes within its borders.

The average American citizen, though he may be a little mystified at its technique, is proud of the Navy. The factory hand at the loom, the miner delving with the pick, the settler as he drives a furrow through virgin soil, each voicing that intelligence wherein lies the hope of the Republic, feels somehow that for him the *Oregon* in Manila bay, the *Kearsarge* and the *Alabama* (names now linked in perpetual love for the Union), mean protection and peace. He is conscious that their sleeping force warrants a surer return for his honest toil.

Let a word or two be said, therefore, in harmony with this broader apprehension by our whole people of what the Navy stands for. Now that the sphere of our responsibility as a nation has widened, and populations heretofore strange to us rely upon the protection of the American flag for an advance of civilization, and for the blessings of a stable government with political freedom, it is plain that new duties are required and will continue to be required of our commanding officers in distant waters. It behooves us, then, to ponder well the inquiry, How shall the Navy officer of the near future best meet the demands that his country has laid upon him? Such is the question you study here to answer.

It is curious to note that two branches of the service which have so much in common should differ widely when brought to a definition. Speak of the Army, and you call before you a body of men armed and trained. Speak of the Navy, and we picture to ourselves ships armed and furnished with officers and crews. That is to say, while the former means men, the latter brings up the material instrument with which men work—a ship and her guns—rather than the man himself. But the world has personified a ship from the days of Homer down. The custom ought not to blind one to the truth that the ship and her armament is, after all, but so much inert matter. It is the man, the brain of man, that is everything.

You will pardon the allusion, but I shall not soon forget the experience of one bright, lovely afternoon in May when I saw



a double-ender gunboat, her flag to the breeze aloft, dashing like a race horse—almost leaping—through the waters of a Carolina sound, until she crashed upon the iron sides of our formidable antagonist, the rebel ram *Albemarle*. It was not the *Sassacus*, but the intrepid *Roë*, that did the deed.

That we may have peace you teach war. You hold officers to the one central fact, that the Navy means organized preparation to crush an enemy. It means that men and material are ready upon the instant.

When Napoleon was asked why his first Italian campaign was the most successful of all his campaigns, his reply was: "Because it was most carefully studied out beforehand." All the book learning in the world might fail to create a successful captain, and yet the leader who can profit by the experience of others has the advantage of him who relies altogether upon his own intuitions.

So here you proclaim that study and hard thinking are in order. A battle on land or water means that somebody has been working out a plan. These various plans in time have evolved rules and maxims based on certain principles that prove of more or less value as guides for future action. What these rules are, how best to apply them, when they can be safely violated—these, and such as these, are vital topics with which the Naval War College deals. All that is intellectual in the make-up of the officer responds gladly to the prospect of an exercise thus invigorating and broadening.

In war, as in every other struggle, the test of success is that the commander works out the largest results possible with the instrument put into his hands. He that waits that he may have something better to go ahead with never wins a battle. The effective force to be got out of a ship depends on the man who handles her. These, to be sure, are but commonplace observations, but, nevertheless, the idea they embody ought ever to be present to the mind of an officer fit to command.

Obviously, the naval profession lies open to very much the same influences that operate in other professions. If there be a leading factor that accounts for the marvelous changes in the latter half of the century now hastening to a close, we

shall recognize it in the multiform facilities that have come into being for intercommunication. People sometimes say that the world is smaller than it used to be. The truth is that, while distances seem smaller, the world, as comprising the circle within which people move about, is larger than ever before. A man lives over a wider range of territory, and comes into actual contact with incalculably more people than did his grandfather, or even his father. The problems of the hour are not only more intricate, but far more numerous, than those of five and twenty years ago. Hence, if one would master a few subjects, instead of getting a superficial acquaintance with many, he must give up the hope of covering a wide field. He becomes a specialist. Such is the inexorable decree of these later days. In business or in science the few who stand at the head have gained distinction by reason of knowing more about some one thing than anybody else.

In the slow and painstaking process of training officers of the Navy, can we hope to escape the workings of this law? Observe, I refrain from expressing an opinion. I merely submit the inquiry whether it be the part of wisdom to attempt to run counter to the workings of what clearly is the trend of development in the higher walks of business, of science, and of the learned professions.

There can be no lowering of the standard. Matchless as is the record of past achievement, the captain of the future must subject himself to a test even more rigid. He shall evince more ardor than PAUL JONES; more skill than HULL; more daring than DECATUR; more firmness than FARRAGUT.

First, and always, he shall be a sailor—shall excel in seamanship. Sails and topgallant masts have disappeared, but the mystery of the ocean remains. To read wind and current; to have his ship in hand through storm and calm; to keep her staunch and trim, and at her best—this is to be in truth a sailor. The aphorism of better than a century ago has not lost its point, that “The winds and waves are always on the side of the ablest navigators.”

Your officer is to carry a stout heart—shrink from nothing—take the risk. He must harbor a comprehension of that

miracle of human ingenuity beneath his feet, the modern battle ship—her build, her motive power, her every capacity, her death-dealing guns, her armor shield, her nicely adjusted mechanisms, the almost countless nerves trembling with life and meaning. He must be able to boast some acquaintance with chemistry, electricity, hygiene, some familiarity with diplomacy, and with the outlines of international law. We would have him conversant with human nature under a blue flannel shirt. A master of discipline, it will go hard with him if he do not possess decision of character to a rare degree of perfection.

See what a list of virtues you are making out for the brain of one man to keep in exercise. If a note of warning lurk in these suggestions, it is that we take precious good care lest our gentlemen of the Navy be required to accomplish too much.

Dr. Johnson is every now and then quoted as having said: "Knowledge is of two kinds. We know a subject ourselves, or we know where we can find information upon it." In like manner, it is to be observed, that while the commander of a ship may have mastered fairly well one or two subdivisions of the many affairs under his control, he sees that for this or that other department, of which he knows something, he can rely upon a subordinate who is specially trained therein.

Let us avoid imposing upon a ranking officer a burden of multitudinous details. His talent and energy are pledged to a service infinitely more important. His business is to study deep, and again and again to reflect upon, the problem how to perfect himself in the use of that which his country has intrusted to him wherewith to meet and destroy the enemy. This it is to compass the art of war in a larger aspect, to rise above what is petty, and to deal with what is grand and enduring.

You will observe thus far we have had in mind the commander of a single ship only. A course of training to fit the officer for this responsible post is begun at the Naval Academy, and continued after graduation for every day that he is on duty.

But the aim of the Naval War College is to lead him onward and upward, that he may grasp the full meaning of the problem

how to bring many ships together into the squadron, or the fleet, and then how to deal with them thus combined and unified.

Who can say of this or that young officer that he may not on some bright morning in the future meet the crucial moment of his life at the head of a line of battle ships? He who wears the uniform must in all seriousness ask himself, "What am I to do if I have a campaign to plan, a victory to gain?" There is but one answer: "I must consult the past. I must gain ready knowledge of what the great sailors of history have done. I must look with clear vision into the principles upon which they went forward to the honor and glory of their country."

Such is the lofty theme to which you here would dedicate the thoughts of your noble profession. Nor is it too much to hope of those who resort hither that each in turn will find himself inspired with the determination to walk "Along the far Eastern uplands, meditating and remembering."

Therefore it is that we bid a hearty Godspeed to your work. Mr. President, may you, and those associated with you, sir, enjoy the rich reward of seeing that work fruitful of the best results to the service and to the country.

